

Vibrations

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Ramblings from Ron

February 21, 2000



According to the groundhogs, there's less than a month of winter left. I don't know about you, but it seems to me that winter has only recently started. I haven't even been ice fishing yet. I guess time flies when you're having fun. We are having fun, aren't we?

Fun certainly was had during our February 4 pre-winterlude Ontario-Quebec skating night on the Rideau Canal. We had a terrific turnout of planners from both sides of the Ottawa River, and the venue provided a great opportunity for sharing of information and nachos. I saw lots of networking and business cards being traded ... or were those Pokémon cards?

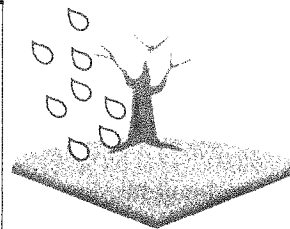
Having fun while tackling the issue of municipal restructuring provided a somewhat greater challenge. The 50 or so participants in our February 10 Restructuring Workshop can be the judge of whether we were successful on this front. We certainly did cover a lot of ground, and I think most people felt that the afternoon was time well spent (albeit too short). Watch your mailings for notice of a follow-up workshop.

Regarding restructuring, I remain convinced that there is a chance for OPPI to have meaningful contribution to the City of Ottawa Transition Board. I believe it is better for planners to help influence change than to let it happen around us. Our guest speaker, Bryan Tuckey, MCIP, RPP, called this being a "change leader". Please don't confuse this with another fun topic, "leader change"...

I'm off to OPPI Council in Toronto in early March for one of our five fun annual meetings. Please send me an E-mail (r.clarke@delcan.com) if you have topics that you would like me to raise there or at our Eastern District meetings.

Cheers!

Ronald A. Clarke, MCIP, RPP
Chair, OPPI Eastern District



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CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF
PLANNERS
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INSTITUT CANADIEN DES
URBANISTES

Eastern District, Ontario
Professional Planners
Institute

Région de l'Est de l'Institut
des Planificateurs de
l'Ontario

UPCOMING EVENTS - IMPORTANT DATES

Eastern District Events

International Planning Night

Tuesday, March 7, 2000,
7-9 p.m.

Richmond Room,
Ottawa-Carleton Centre
111 Lisgar Street, Ottawa

Insightful discussion and slide presentations by:

Patrick Déoux, Past President, CIP;

Amr Elleithy, Fed. of Canadian Municipalities;

Sally McIntyre, R.V. Anderson Assocs.;

David Kriger, Delcan Corporation; and

Michel Frojmovic, Acacia Consulting & Research.

RSVP to Leeann McGovern
730-5709

Urban Forum Series

Urban Diversity:

Managing Multicultural Cities

Tuesday, March 21, 2000,
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Haydon Hall,
Ottawa-Carleton Centre
111 Lisgar Street, Ottawa

A workshop, in partnership with The Metropolis Project, examining international migration and urban planning.

Panelists: **Dr. Dan Hiebert**, Dept. of Geography, UBC;

Kass Sunderji, Ontario Region, Canadian Heritage;

Carl Nicholson, Catholic Immigration Centre;

Gérard Moreau, Government of France; and

Meyer Burstein, Metropolis Project, Moderator.

Registration \$30 (\$5 for full-time students with ID).

Contact: CIP 1-800-207-2138,
fax (613) 237-7045,

E-mail: general@cip-icu.ca

Vibrations

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Editor:

David Becker
3822 Albion Rd. S.,
Gloucester, Ontario, K1T 1A8
Phone: (home) 523 5806
(office) 730 5709
Fax: 523 3468
e-mail dbecker@netrover.com

Assistant Editor:

Mike Michaud
Development Department
City of Gloucester
1595 Telesat Court
P. O. Box 8333
Gloucester, Ontario K1G 3V5

Publications Committee:

Barb McMullen (chair)
Greg Winters
Mark Boileau
Vance Bedore
Brenda Burjaw (Queen's 2nd year)
David Luchuck (Queen's 1st year)

NEW MEMBERS:

OPPI (Eastern Ontario District)

Provisional Members

Martin Czarski,

South Nation Conservation

Kevin Jones,

Land Use and Parks Planner

PEOPLE & PLACES:

Kevin Jones, formerly a planner at the NCC, is establishing his own consulting business, with a particular focus on assessment and management of human impacts in national parks.

Urban Forum Series:

Shaping Our Cities by Design

by Barb McMullen, MCIP, RPP, Publications Representative

The February 16th Urban Forum lecture "Shaping Our Cities by Design" focused on ensuring the quality of our communities by integrating urban design in all aspects of land development decision-making. The lecture was timely and thought-provoking for the some 75 planners, architects, landscape architects, and Ottawa citizens attending the event at the Ottawa-Carleton centre. Moderated by Nelson Edwards, Landscape Architect, MCIP, RPP and member of the Urban Forum Steering Committee, the evening featured three speakers focusing on Toronto's new approach to urban design and the response of the development and municipal law sectors to the revised process and emerging form.

Architect Robert Glover, Director of Urban Design at the City of Toronto, and Adjunct Assoc. Prof. in the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design at the Univ. of Toronto, identified three points about cities that should serve as the basis for good planning and design: 1) The physical character of a city results from many people making decisions over time. 2) The most controversial decisions reflect the balance between the city as a place of memory and as a laboratory for change. 3) The "glue" that holds decisions together is a way of seeing the city, or a paradigm, (not a particular design "vision") that requires re-interpretation on an incremental basis, adding culturally compatible new elements to those that preceded them.

Toronto's previous "way of seeing" focused on the preservation of its traditional urbanism, which is revealed mainly through its urban design patterns. The 1998 amalgamation brought together seven municipalities with different ways of seeing and planning the city, including often contradictory suburban and urban attitudes toward change and urbanism. Today, rather than focusing on basic urbanism questions, the debate is more about how to "do it right" in a given situation.

Toronto's urban design resulted from two major con-

cerns: the way new buildings result in a pattern that defines the public realm, and the way the public realm accommodates people. Toronto's previous design paradigm was reflected in a policy and development approval framework that included policies, guidelines, zoning and large and small scale projects, as well as a civic improvement program that created new and improved public squares, streets, and places, and a public art program. This paradigm has been quite successful and is subscribed to by planners, architects, developers, politicians, and residents.

Toronto's current context involves infill within its new boundaries, intensification, and conversion of obsolete

areas and buildings. To accommodate this change, Glover believes the city needs to move from traditional planning criteria to an approach based more on context, design, and environmental fit. A new Official Plan is being developed that will establish a sense of identity and place, addressing ideas of both memory and change. It is expected the plan will identify: *stable areas*, e.g. neighbourhoods and heritage areas which will accommodate only fine-grained change; *redevelopment areas*, e.g. arterials, main streets, and areas of greater intensification, such as the King-Spadina redevelopment area; and *brownfield or greenfield*

areas, where significant change requires new public infrastructure.

Urban design is viewed as the key enabler for this approach, and there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of public spaces and public art as an integrating element. Toronto's new approach evolved gradually, starting with a broad recognition that traditional regulations and controls were not achieving the desired results. A series of collaborative charrettes were held focusing on specific areas; the Univ. of Toronto's 3-d computer model is increasingly used for modeling exercises; and Toronto is now instituting an architecture and urban design award program. New

"In other words, how the pieces go together to create good buildings, good building patterns and good open spaces will be increasingly more important than many of the traditional planning criteria."

- Robert Glover

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Official Plan policies are being developed that express the urban design paradigm, along with infill guidelines to standardize intensification criteria across the city. Urban design is integral to the development approval process. The King-Spadina Plan and the University of Toronto Plan reflect this emphasis, eliminating most use and density restrictions and utilizing prescribed building envelopes and urban design principles.

In Glover's view, Ottawa's amalgamation represents a planning and urban design challenge to create a paradigm which establishes a clear sense of place, identity, and time; to create new kinds of rules and policies that respect Ottawa's communities and neighbourhoods, and its role as a national capital; and to integrate Ottawa's geographically separate areas through a program of civic improvements and public art.

Steve Diamond, Chair of McCarthy Tétrault's municipal and environmental law group, characterized the city's new approach as a "quiet revolution" in planning that is resulting in a better city. Urban design is becoming the leading aspect of approval as opposed to the rigid approach to controls typified by the 1970s. From a developer's perspective, good urban design often results in greater density. Citing the results of some recent studies of high density areas in Toronto to identify community concerns about crime, it was found that many of these areas had no "public passageways", emphasizing the need to deal not just with the form of buildings, but also the pattern of nearby public streets and spaces.

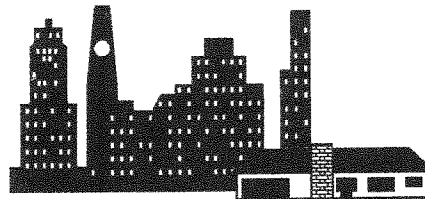
Diamond acknowledged that an urban design approach involves some risks from a regulatory perspective. It can still be argued that urban design is subjective and that it contributes to a lack of certainty. There is also some question whether politicians will follow the advice of urban designers and planners or instead insist on traditional controls. Diamond, however, believes it is better to argue good urban design than density at the OMB, and that certainty can be achieved through broad Official Plan policies with no density or specific height controls, and zoning containing a prescribed set of guidelines.

Mark Hewitt, senior vice president of Concord Adex Developments, previously with the IBI Group and former manager of Toronto's Urban Design Division, discussed the role of urban design in the process of implementing the CityPlace development in downtown Toronto. Situated on the railway lands on a large urban

brownfield site west of Skydome, CityPlace is proceeding based on Toronto's 1997 approval of modified Official Plan policies and zoning by-laws, incorporating simplified controls with significantly greater flexibility.

Hewitt believes good urban design requires an understanding of a complex set of inter-related disciplines. From a developer's perspective, ignoring reasonable urban design objectives causes hodgepodge design, delay, modifications, and added costs: it is better to address urban design on a proactive basis through early discussions with municipal staff—who need to know clearly what is desired.

The panel addressed a number of questions from the audience. Concerning the role citizens play in the new process, the panel indicated no dramatic changes are proposed to stable areas, but where change occurs there would be no reduction of citizens' input, with developers being required to call community meetings. With respect to transportation and its role in urban design decisions, Glover expressed the view that traffic is important but that sometimes congestion itself functions as a good solution, with a result that may lead to more people living downtown.



Vibrations is looking for articles by OPPI members relevant to planning issues, studies or events within the Eastern District, as well as people-and-places news for its summer issue.

Please forward all copy and accompanying photos or graphic material to
Barb McMullen,
 Publications Representative,
 by May 15, 2000, preferably by e-mail:
bmcmullen@netcom.ca
 or by fax (613) 730-1353;
 telephone (613) 730-2663.

CITY OF OTTAWA DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SUMMIT

*by Robert Spicer, Senior Planner,
City of Ottawa*

On October 6, 1999 Ottawa City Council approved the launching of a new initiative, led by Mayor Jim Watson and Councillor Elizabeth Arnold, to promote downtown revitalization. As part of this initiative a community-based summit was held on January 29, 2000 at Ottawa City Hall. The purpose of the Downtown Revitalization Summit was to bring forward fresh ideas and actions that could build upon past successful downtown revitalization efforts, such as the Residential Downtown Intensification (Re-Do-It) program. Since 1994 Re-Do-It has produced 1400 residential units accommodating 2500 new residents in the downtown and inner city area.

The Summit was an all-day facilitated workshop organized by the Department of Urban Planning and Public Works. Over 80 individuals, including planners, architects, developers, residents and politicians, were brought together for the day to discuss their ideas for downtown revitalization. Although a wide range of interests were represented at the workshop, all those participating had a shared enthusiasm for the future of down-

town Ottawa. Frank Lewinberg, an architect and urban planner with the Toronto firm of Urban Strategies, provided the keynote address, emphasizing the need to ensure that our downtowns can compete successfully with suburban development.

The participants broke into ten groups to brainstorm ideas and initiatives to promote downtown revitalization. Suggestions included changing one-way streets to two-way, providing more on-street parking, accommodating infill housing of all types, instituting urban design guidelines rather than zoning regulations, waiving development related fees, improving streetscapes and increasing street tree planting, among many other excellent ideas. Participants recognized that although some short-term initiatives could be implemented immediately by the current City Council, others would need to be presented to the new City of Ottawa for consideration following amalgamation, which will take effect on January 1, 2001.

Planning staff will now sift through the hundreds of initiatives and ideas in order to prepare an action plan for the revitalization of Ottawa's downtown, which will be presented to City Council for approval in the Spring, 2000.

Eastern District Workshop: Preliminary Session on *Delivering Municipal Planning Services in the New City of Ottawa*

OPPI Eastern District recently held a half-day workshop to explore the best way(s) to deliver municipal planning and development services in the new restructured City of Ottawa. Held on February 10, 2000 at the Ottawa-Carleton centre, the workshop was attended by broad representation of over 50 members of the Eastern District. Ron Clarke, Chair of the Eastern District indicated the ultimate objective is to make a submission to the newly formed transition board on behalf of OPPI Eastern District membership.

Bryan Tuckey, MCIP, RPP began the afternoon by sharing some lessons from Toronto's restructuring, based on his position as former Planning Commissioner of the City of North York. Bryan is now Director of the Provincial Planning and Environmental Services Branch in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Tuckey offered a number of principles, as follows, based on his personal perspective and experience, that are important to restructuring municipal planning and development services and to planners experiencing these changes:

- *Create a culture:* Start by asking what do we want to achieve as a cultural organization, and what should its fundamental values be?
- *Accept change and be a "change leader":* Minimize the time of uncertainty; move forward with "considered haste" and embrace change. Planners will set the course for the city.
- *Do a personal self-assessment:* Your job will be more difficult and bigger tomorrow. Assess your strengths and accomplishments; create your own "coat-tails" and be prepared for a ride.
- *Identify core business areas and priorities:* Determine the best ways to deliver service to your major clients. How important is service to the community, and what are the essential service elements? Know your clients and their needs; believe what they say.
- *Determine whether you really need a planning department:* Deal with questions relating to official plan(s) and zoning by-law(s), the need for

flexibility, commissioner/director relationships, boundaries, satellite offices, and others. Enhance important city features through the planning documents.

- *Streamline and improve process management:* Look at the benefits of case/team management. Create manageable units. Clear up any delegation questions early on. Push the envelope of delegation and accountability down to staff. Help them develop their judgment skills.
- *Know your budget:* identify opportunities and accomplishments.

With the guidance of Patrick Déoux and a preliminary list of topics and questions, the workshop participants divided into groups to discuss four major topics: organization, business process streamlining, community-based services, and official plans and by-laws. The following briefly captures just a few of the preliminary suggestions by each group:

Organization

- Base new department on principles of coordination and cooperation, continuity, accountability, accessibility, and transparency
- Be "change leaders"; be watchful of the public interest; planners need to take on more of a facilitation and mediation role
- Suggest some modification to the Shortliffe department flow chart; ensure effective liaison with Transportation & Works; suggest a team-based (case management) approach to studies and approvals

Business Process Streamlining

- Need for "flexible" OP and Zoning; regulations should focus on end product (design issues); consider using new Development Permit system in Ottawa

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- Utilize delegation powers under the Planning Act, and outline appropriate conditions for a "bump-up" system to committee
- Identify 2001 priorities, e.g., clearly defined processes even if transitional, new consolidated application form, standardized approval conditions

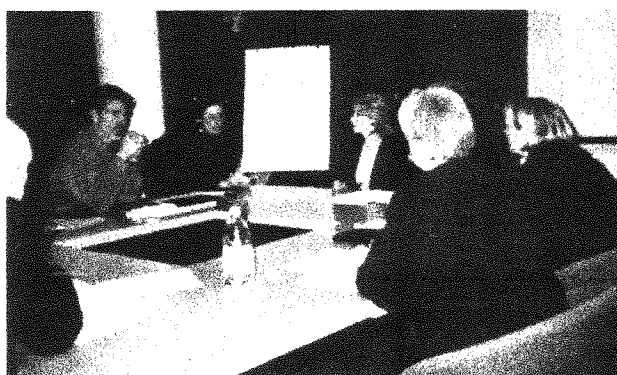
Community-Based Services

- At satellite offices: offer planning information and simpler permitting functions, share information/expertise among offices, hold certain types of meetings there
- Standardize business processes but not at expense of community/cultural diversity
- Consider possible need for "professional centres"

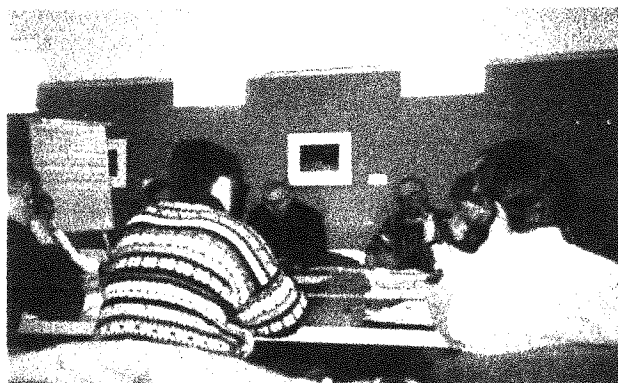
Official Plans and By-Laws

- Possibly have a transition period where existing OPs continue to apply; establish a policy transition team; run zoning process in tandem if/when new OP is established
- Option for a new OP vs. carry on modifying current OPs; determine which policies are locally based vs City-wide matters
- Use a more flexible approach to zoning and regulations; create guidelines as opposed to regulations or long policy documents

At the end of the day, it was agreed that a subsequent workshop will be held at an early date to be determined, to pursue these and other topics further.



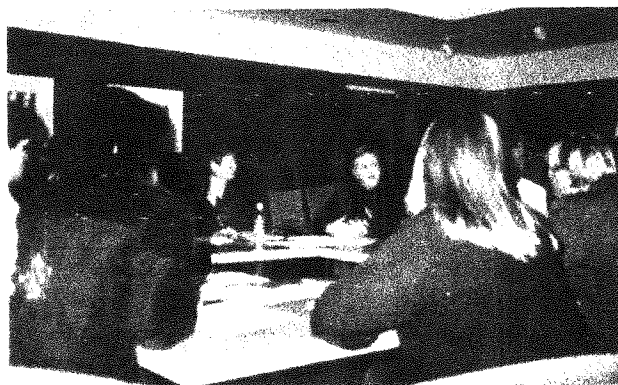
Organization
Group



Official Plan and
By-laws Group



Business Process
Streamlining
Group



Community-
Based Services
Group

Ottawa-Carleton's transition board, appointed by the Province to ensure an effective transition in the amalgamation of regional municipalities to the new City of Ottawa, held its first public meeting February 14. The board is chaired by former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Claude Bennett, who also previously served as chairman of the board of CMHC, and as a member of Ottawa-Carleton's first regional council and Ottawa City Council.

Joining Bennett on the board are six other members, including Albert Bouwers, former councillor and mayor of the Township of Osgoode and Ottawa-Carleton regional councillor; Camille Guilbault, who was a member of the Citizen's Panel on Restructuring in Ottawa-Carleton; David Muir, a chartered accountant and partner of BDO Dunwoody and member of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants; Edward Mulkins, a former member of Ottawa City Council, as well as Ottawa Regional Council; Kathy Greiner, who is stepping down from her position of the chair of the Nepean Hydro Commission to participate in the transition process; and Pierre Tessier, city manager of City Gloucester, who is taking a leave of absence to devote all his time to the transition board.

The board's responsibilities include hiring key municipal officers and executive staff, establishing an organizational structure for the new city and local boards, and other duties. The board is charged with recommending a budget for 2001 and identifying its assumptions about the core business of the municipality, the

scope and level of services to be provided, how services should be delivered, and staffing implications. Note: A complete description of the transition board's roles and responsibilities can be viewed at:

<http://www.mmah.gov.on.ca/inthnews/releases/>

Queen's Park also gave residents in Fitzroy and Torbolton, two historic townships in West Carleton, the right to decide in a plebiscite whether they wish to remain in the new city or leave and join either Lanark or Renfrew counties. The plebiscite will be held on March 6, 2000. If the plebiscite determines residents wish to leave the new City of Ottawa, a restructuring proposal must be submitted to the Province by March 17th, following which the minister will make a decision to approve, or not approve, the restructuring proposal.

The transition board also recently appointed Shane Kennedy as chief electoral officer for the upcoming November election. Kennedy is being seconded to the position by the RMOC, where he is Manager of the Clerk's Department. Shane is also a Member of CIP, a Registered Professional Planner, and a member of OPPI. Gardner Church was also appointed as a policy consultant to the board. Church is a former provincial municipal affairs deputy minister, previously acted as Ottawa-Carleton municipal restructuring facilitator, and participated in the recently amalgamated City of Kingston's transition board. The board also appointed Ottawa municipal lawyer Peter Vice as its legal adviser, and the consulting firm of Chris George Associates as its communication and media advisers.

Restructuring in Ottawa-Carleton: UPDATE

RIDEAU STREET DESIGN CHARRETTE

Eastern District OPPI recently helped sponsor the Rideau Street Design Charrette, held the weekend of February 11-13 at the Ottawa Congress Centre. The result of the local architectural community joining forces with the Downtown Rideau Business Improvement Area and a variety of participating organizations, the purpose of the charrette was to generate renewed interest in Rideau Street and to introduce new ideas for its redevelopment. The charrette study area covered the entire length of Rideau Street from Sussex Drive to the Cummings Ave. Bridge, extending one block north and south.

The full weekend charrette was kicked off on Friday night, February 10 by a number of guest speakers, each briefly discussing a number of issues relating to the future of Rideau Street that are important to their organizations. Mayor Jim Watson, City of Ottawa; Pam Sweet, Director of Policy & Infrastructure, RMOC; Helen Gault, Director of Planning & Development; OC Transpo; Donna Holtom, Chair, Downtown Rideau BIA; and Peter Marwitz, Action Sandy Hill, identified priority issues relating to the future of Rideau street.

The guest speaker was Norm Hotson of Hotson Bakker, a prominent urban designer whose projects include Granville Island in Vancouver and the Sussex Drive Master Plan. Hotson, who illustrated the elements of great streets, views the street as a frame-

work for city building, a place for movement, communication and development, and as a place for public interaction and public events.

Five charrette teams spent the weekend addressing a number of significant opportunities and challenges facing Rideau Street, proposing design solutions, concepts and ideas promoting revitalization and redevelopment properties fronting both sides of the street, to return Rideau Street to its former status as one of Ottawa's great streets. Illustrated panels reflecting the suggestions by the five teams reflected a considerable degree of consensus on both Rideau Street's existing assets, as well as suggestions for improvement and redevelopment, such as the removal of through truck traffic, lessening of the impacts of bus transit, redesign and/or removal of overhead bridges, protection of heritage resources, incorporation of on-street parking and redevelopment of vacant parking lots. East of King Edward Avenue, suggestions included additional residential development and small-scale commercial and neighbourhood-serving uses, new small open spaces or courtyards adjacent to the street, additional street tree planting and other means to "tame the street", on-street parking, the opening of closed Lowertown north-south streets north of Rideau St., and others.

Planners' Stories

Recently you likely received an e-mail from Robert Buchan in Victoria, B.C. asking for planning stories you may wish to contribute to a book he is preparing. For those who have already seen this, read on elsewhere, but for those who haven't, why not send your favourite story? Robert's e-mail, reprinted below with his permission:

As planners we have daily contact with the public. Sometimes the

nature of this contact is somewhat entertaining. I am working on a book which looks at the lighter side of our profession. If you have any humorous, strange, bizarre, heartwarming or otherwise interesting stories which you would be willing to have included in a book, I would like to hear from you. Any published stories would, of course, protect the identity of the people in them. I would, though, include

your name, if desired, in the credits. Why write such a book? It will give readers a glimpse into the work world of the planner and would also give us practitioners some comic relief. Please include your name and address. Thank you for your help. You can email your material to me at: buchans@telus.net or by mail to: Robert Buchan, M.C.I.P. 2864 Santana Drive Victoria B.C. V9B 5B2

Planners on Ice

by Leeann McGovern, Program Events



Alice Fyfe, Robin Bennett, Dennis Jacobs & Mary Jarvis



Éloi de Belle Feuille, Dennis Gratton, Sandra Candow, Alice Fyfe, Julie St. Jean, Pierre Malo & Richard Scott in the background



More than 30 planners met at Mexicali Rosa's at Dow's Lake on February 3rd as part of an initiative to bring together planners from the Eastern District of OPPI and OUQ (Ordre des urbanistes du Québec). The evening of skating and socializing was attended by members from as far away as St. Lazare and Montréal, as well as some new Eastern District recruits. A great time was had by all. Special thanks to Pierre Malo for his organization of the OUQ side.



Chantal Laliberté, Alain Jourdain, Éloi de Belle Feuille, Carolyn Walsh, Ron Clarke, Steven Boyle, Lisa Young & Julie St. Jean